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ABSTRACT

The Commission on Quantum Quality was established by the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD) in February, 1992, to investigate total quality management (TQM) programs in community colleges, universities, the government sector, and business and industry in order to recommend an appropriate program for MCCCD. To gather information, the commission sought written materials and videos, hired a consultant, invited TQM practitioners to speak at meetings, and conducted a site visit. Based on these activities, the commission concluded that TQM can be utilized by an educational institution, that it is a lifetime commitment for institutions that empowers employees throughout the organization, that it provides tools for improving work processes, and that it means a change in the culture of the organization. Commission recommendations to MCCCD included: (1) the chancellor, with the support of the governing board, should begin a Quantum Quality Initiative (QQI) throughout the district immediately; (2) the chancellor and a steering team should lead the QQI by developing its vision and mission statements with specific implementation strategies and timetables; (3) communication concerning QQI should begin immediately, be pervasive, and involve all employees; (4) implementation of QQI should begin with education and training for all employees; (5) the QQI should be integrated into MCCCD classrooms; (6) MCCCD should establish external partnerships to ensure broad-based community support and involvement; and (7) monitoring analysis and evaluation of all efforts in the QQI should be developed and implemented to ensure success. (MAB)

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REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON QUANTUM



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Presented to

DR. PAUL A. ELSNER
Chancellor

**Maricopa County Community College
District**

August, 1992

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The Commission on Quantum Quality extends its appreciation to Lisa Haar, Cheryll Eliason, Greta Holliday, and Betty Myers for their dedicated and cheerful assistance to the Commission. Special thanks to Bobby Sample for the fine illustrations in the report and for sharing his expertise in the design and layout of the report. Additional thanks go to Lisa Haar, Dr. William Waechter, Dianne Johns and Barbara Yancy for reading the draft report and contributing comments.



August 1, 1992

Dr. Paul A. Elsner
Chancellor
Maricopa County Community College District
2411 West 14th St.
Tempe, AZ 85281-6941

LETTER

Dear Dr. Elsner:

OF

We are pleased to transmit to you the Report of the Commission on Quantum Quality. We are speaking for each Commission member when we say "thank you" for allowing us to undertake the challenges of examining total quality management and designing Quantum Quality for the Maricopa District.

TRANSMITTAL

This has been a rewarding experience for all of us. We blossomed into experienced team members with the skillful help of our consultants and each other. Our ground rules, our shared vision, and the large amount of time devoted to presentation of background information helped us achieve our goal with a minimum of fuss and a maximum of fun.

With great enthusiasm and optimism we present our recommendations and offer our continuing assistance to you. We very much wish to be involved in implementing a Quantum Quality Initiative at Maricopa.

Sincerely,

Linda Thor, President
Rio Salado Community College
Co-Chair

Ron Bleed, Vice-Chancellor
of Information Technologies
Co-Chair

The Commission on Quantum Quality was composed of:

Co-Chairs:

Linda Thor	<i>President</i>	Rio Salado
Ron Bleed	<i>Vice-Chancellor of Information Technologies</i>	District Office

Members:

COMMISSION

Erma Abeyta	<i>Office Coordinator</i>	South Mountain
Roy Amrein	<i>Governing Board</i>	
Marilyn Anderson	<i>Assistant Controller</i>	District Office
Andy Bernal	<i>Dean, Business & Technology</i>	Chandler-Gilbert
Don Campbell	<i>Governing Board</i>	

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John Silvester	<i>Assoc. Dean, Student Services</i>	Scottsdale
Madison Walker	<i>AV Technician</i>	Rio Salado



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The COMMISSION ON QUANTUM QUALITY was established by Chancellor Paul Elsner of the Maricopa County Community College District in February, 1992. The charge of the Commission was to investigate total quality management programs in community colleges, universities, the government sector, and business and industry, and to recommend a program for Maricopa which paid special attention to the manner in which students are served and to the District Office, focused on the central vision of the District - effective teaching and learning - and set forth an implementation strategy for each college and the District Office.

The members of the Commission were appointed to ensure representation of employee policy groups and locations within the Maricopa District. The Commission employed an intensive educational approach to the task. Consultants, speakers, TQM practitioners, videos, books, articles, and site visits were a few of the educational methods employed.

The Commission's Major Findings:

- The concepts of total quality management are transferable to an educational institution.
- Quality improvement is a lifetime commitment, and time spent now in implementing a quality improvement program means time and money saved by eliminating re-work and redundancy.
- Quality improvement empowers employees throughout the organization and will result in higher productivity and increased morale.
- Work failures occur when processes fail, not people. Quality improvement provides tools and techniques to improve work processes systematically.
- Quality improvement will mean a change in the culture of the organization.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMISSION:

1. The Chancellor, with the support of the Governing Board, should begin a Quantum Quality Initiative immediately - throughout the District Office, all colleges, and throughout administrative offices and classrooms.
2. The Chancellor and a Steering Team composed of representatives of the Chancellor's Executive Council and representatives of the employee policy groups should lead the Quantum Quality Initiative with such actions as developing its vision and mission statements with specific implementation strategies and timetables.
3. Communication concerning the Quantum Quality Initiative should begin immediately, be pervasive and involve all employees.
4. Implementation of the Quantum Quality Initiative should begin with education and training for all employees. Appropriate and adequate resources to support the initiative now and in the future must be allocated.
5. The Quantum Quality Initiative should be integrated into Maricopa classrooms.
6. The Maricopa District should establish external partnerships to ensure broad-based community support and involvement.
7. Monitoring, analysis and evaluation of all efforts in the Quantum Quality Initiative should be developed and implemented to ensure success.

DR. PAUL ELSNER'S VISION

In November of 1991, Dr. Paul A. Elsner presented his vision of the future of the Maricopa County Community College District to a large number of Maricopa management staff. He termed the future look and new culture of Maricopa as "QUANTUM QUALITY." Dr. Elsner projected quantum quality as a time when the organization would be more effective. Dr. Elsner concluded that the highest state of quantum quality is usually the beginning of new realizations or a new era -- and a foundation for many future plans.

THE COMMISSION'S CHARGE

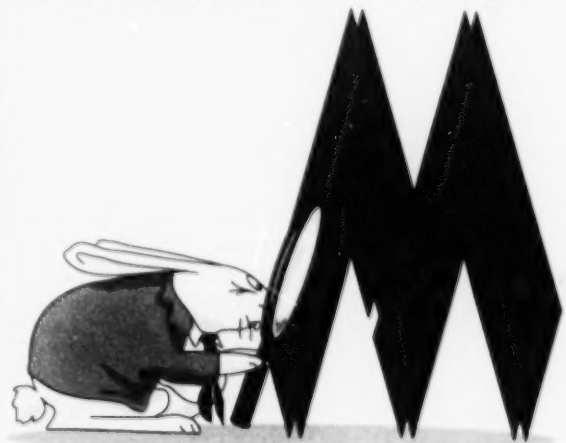
With these early thoughts in mind, Dr. Elsner established the Commission on Quantum Quality in February, 1992. The Commission was charged with the following:

- Investigate past practices in universities, community colleges, the government sector and corporations regarding total quality management programs.
- Invite selected programs to Maricopa for presentation before the Commission.
- Recommend a program for the Maricopa Community Colleges which does the following:
 - a. Pays special attention to the manner in which students are served.
 - b. Maintains the focus of total quality management on the central vision of our District --- effective teaching and learning.
 - c. Pays special attention to the relationships, arrangements, and offices of the District office.
 - d. Proposes a quality-based vision for the District.
 - e. Proposes an implementation strategy for each college and the District to capture opportunities for continuous improvement.

THE COMMISSION'S APPROACH

The Commission's work included an intensive investigative phase. A consultant, Dr. Kathy Hagler of the Technology Exchange Center, was employed to assist in planning and conducting many of the meetings of Commission members. She was assisted by other members of her firm and other consultants. Meetings of the Commission were held April 2, 3, 9, 23, June 18, 29 and 30. There were five full-day working sessions and two half-day sessions. Commission members were also invited to attend a special seminar offered by Patrick Townsend on May 29 entitled, "Quality In Action." In addition, a few smaller groups were formed to report back to the full Commission on specific issues.

The Chancellor's charge to the Commission emphasized the need to investigate what was happening in total quality management (TQM) programs. The Commission members had little background information so initially we needed to obtain a basic understanding of total quality management and its experts or gurus, principles, history, techniques, track record, etc. We sought out written materials and videos, and invited a number of experts and speakers to address what was happening in total quality management in other organizations. The Appendix of this Report contains a more detailed summary of the educational steps of the Commission. We urge you to examine that carefully since a solid background in TQM is essential for understanding and supporting a program of quality improvement.



PHILOSOPHY OF TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT

The Commission learned that the essential philosophy of total quality management involves four points:

- o **Total commitment to excellence.**
- o **All work is composed of processes that can be continually improved through the use of statistical methods.**
- o **Participation by everyone, everywhere, is required.**
- o **The focus is on customer needs and expectations, and includes both external and internal customers.**

Key characteristics of any TQM program are:

- o **Customer Focus**
- o **Dedication to Continuous Improvement**
- o **Process, not Product, Orientation**
- o **A Systematic Approach to Process Analysis**
- o **Teamwork**
- o **Involving People Doing the Job**
- o **A Top-Down and Bottom-Up Commitment with an Organization-Wide Focus**
- o **Use of Statistical Methods to Eliminate Variability in Work Performance**



MAJOR FINDINGS

The Commission made a number of major findings after studying the philosophy and key characteristics of TQM programs and completing its intensive investigation of TQM.

First, although TQM developed initially in business, *The concept of quality improvement is transferable to an educational institution.* Some of the terminology may be foreign to higher education, but quality improvement applies to us. Our "product" is education. Our customers include students, taxpayers, the governing board, and employees. Some of the strategies, tools and techniques of TQM are not currently in use in higher education, but we believe they can be used successfully.

Second, *Quality improvement is a lifetime commitment.* There is no "quick fix." Quality improvement causes systemic changes in organizational processes.

Third, *It will take time to implement a quality improvement program but the time spent now is a valuable investment.* Time spent now in doing the work right the first time eliminates the need to re-do the work. Eliminating re-work is a time-saver and money-saver.

Fourth, *Focusing on quality improvement will mean a change in the culture of the organization.* This will mean a change in the way we do business as our focus turns to customer satisfaction and teamwork. Employee morale will improve, along with productivity.

Fifth, *Quality improvement will empower employees throughout the organization.* We believe that the person doing the job knows better than anyone else the best way to do the job and how to improve job performance. We also believe that many of our employees are under-utilized and their potential must be tapped more fully.

Sixth, *When work failures occur, a quality improvement program tells us to look first to the failure of processes, not people.*

WHY QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AT MARICOPA?

The Commission had no trouble deciding that a quality improvement program was right for the Maricopa District at this time for a number of very solid reasons. Those reasons may be summarized as PEOPLE - both inside and outside of our organization. More specific reasons for recommending development of a quality improvement program at Maricopa include:

Our strong desire to remain a leader in our community and in the educational arena. It seems clear to us that Maricopa must embark on a quality improvement program to remain competitive. We strongly believe that we are an excellent community college district in terms of our overarching mission: effective teaching and learning. However, we know we can improve, and we know that a quality improvement program is the way to make desirable change occur. Also, we want to set the example for quality improvement in our community and in the educational field, and we want others to follow us in quality improvement.

The need to become more focused on those we serve. What do our customers want and expect from us? How can we meet their expectations? How can we serve them in the way they want to be served? A quality improvement program will help us answer those questions systematically and successfully. It will mean adopting new attitudes, tools and techniques to solve problems and respond to opportunities. Our decisions must be supported by customer feedback, data and analysis, not gut feelings.

The desire to end turf battles among the colleges and between the colleges and district office. Productivity, efficiency and effectiveness are hindered when we are locked in competitive combat. The District Office must truly serve the colleges, and the many roles of the colleges and District Office must be clarified. Competition must give way to cooperation and sharing at Maricopa.

The potential of the human side of quality. We recognize the value and benefits of empowering people, honesty, and building trust within the organization. We learned that an essential component of quality improvement programs is the development of work environments that foster open communication, trust, and constructive resolution of problems. We have come to realize that many "undiscussables" exist at Maricopa that will need to be discussed. We have learned the benefits of discussing the "undiscussables" - as well as the difficulty of doing so. This piece of quality improvement was one of the most exciting.

The advantages of providing a systematic approach to decisionmaking. A quality improvement program will provide new tools and techniques to help us define priorities and work toward accomplishing those priorities efficiently and effectively.

CLIMATE FOR SUCCESS

The Commission feels confident that Maricopa should pursue a quality improvement program at this time. However, this recommendation is made with some risk. The Commission knows that some attempts at implementing quality improvement programs have succeeded and some have undoubtedly failed. Therefore, based on what we have learned from successful efforts, we believe it is important to note that certain factors may help ensure successful implementation of a quality improvement program.

The "success" factors include the following:

● TOP MANAGEMENT MUST:

lead the effort. They must practice TQM and not just pay lip service to TQM.

play a continuing, active role in implementation of the program through participative leadership and involvement in training.

recognize that some changes will be intangible and will not show up in the "bottom line."

● ALL MANAGERS MUST:

be willing to **adopt** changes in their management style, attitudes and in the role they play in the organization.

drive fear out of the workplace, promote open and honest communication and ensure a meaningful system of rewards and recognition.

embrace the notion that most employees are here to do a good job and want to enjoy and take pride in their work.

must be willing to **empower** others to make decisions and follow through with appropriate actions. Empowered employees have authority equal to their responsibilities.

● ALL EMPLOYEES MUST:

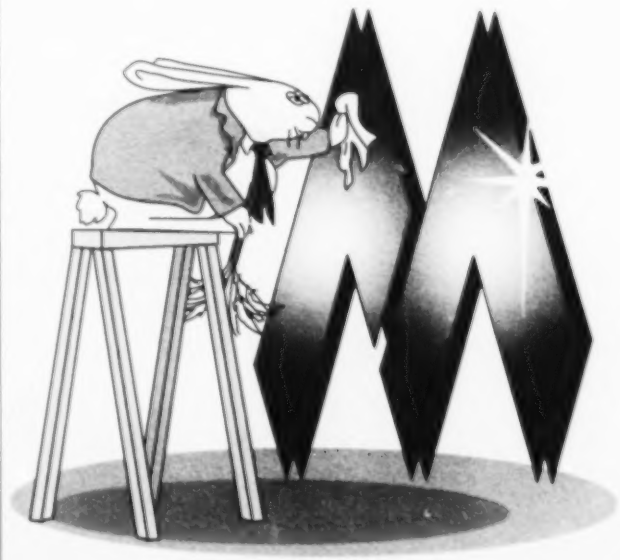
be **involved** in identifying and resolving problems and in responding to opportunities.

accept the notion that problems arise out of failures in the process, not failures of people.

accept that implementation of a quality improvement program needs to be monitored, supported, and nurtured. Failure to follow through nearly always ensures there will not be another opportunity to implement the process within a reasonable time.

understand that quality improvement is a continuous process, and tangible, long-term benefits may be realized only years after implementation.

recognize that the real benefits of a quality improvement program come from changes in the organizational culture although other short-term benefits may result, too.



RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMISSION

The Commission on Quantum Quality spent one full day exploring potential recommendations. The following sections list the recommendations and explain why they were made, and further describe the comprehensive nature of the Quantum Quality Initiative as viewed by the Commission members.

1. The Chancellor, with the support of the Governing Board, should begin a Quantum Quality Initiative immediately - throughout the District Office, all colleges and throughout administrative offices and classrooms.

The Commission has no hesitation in recommending that a Quantum Quality Initiative be developed and implemented throughout all of the Maricopa District offices and its colleges. The enthusiasm for a quality improvement program became infectious as we worked. We believe Maricopa is a quality institution, and such an institution is the kind that benefits most from a quality improvement program.

We urge wide distribution of our report - AND careful reading of the entire report. We plan to present the formal report and discuss our findings and recommendations with the Chancellor and the Governing Board in September. We encourage employees to attend that public meeting. We believe strongly all employees should become aware of the concepts of quality improvement as early as possible so we can begin to re-condition our system as quickly as possible. We also strongly suggest that we take advantage of a number of existing "learning opportunities"

afforded employees and offer additional quality improvement awareness training through faculty convocations, management breakfasts, special meetings with employee groups, the honors forum, newsletters, and showcasing in-house programs such as Rio Salado's.

Quality improvement is not a passing fad or management's latest fancy. It is substantive and can help the Maricopa District and our colleges meet the challenges of effective teaching and learning in the future.

2. The Chancellor and a Steering Team composed of representatives of the Chancellor's Executive Council and representatives of employee policy groups should lead the Quantum Quality Initiative with such actions as developing its vision and mission statements with specific implementation strategies and timetables.

The Chancellor, representatives from the Chancellor's Executive Council (CEC), and representatives from all of the employee policy groups should serve as the initial Steering Team for the Quantum Quality Initiative. The vision and mission statements must be developed by this group. They must lead the process. We recommend that a Quality Coordinator be appointed at each college and the District Office to assist the leaders of the Initiative and to ensure that action follows and results are documented. Each Quality Coordinator should be a "believer" and a "doer." Training for the Steering Team should begin immediately as should training for all members of the CEC and Quality Coordinators. The CEC and Steering Team members must be given sufficient support to lead the Quantum Quality Initiative.

3. Communication concerning the Quantum Quality Initiative should begin immediately, be pervasive and involve all employees.

The message of the Quantum Quality Initiative must spread as quickly and as pervasively as possible to all employees. Every communications tool and vehicle should be used to build awareness of quality improvement, our commitment to implementing quality improvement, and the role of each employee in that effort. Dissemination of the Commission's Report is only the beginning.

4. Implementation of the Quantum Quality Initiative should begin with education and training for all employees. Appropriate and adequate resources to support the initiative now and in the future must be allocated.

The only way to begin implementing a quality improvement initiative is through training and education. Awareness training alone is not specific enough for implementation to succeed. Specific implementation strategies and timetables should be developed by the Steering Team. However, we recommend that the following points be considered by the Steering Team when they develop the implementation plan.

Existing training opportunities should be turned into quality improvement training opportunities throughout the District and the colleges.

In-house expertise should be identified and utilized to the fullest extent. For example, the in-house expertise of Rio Salado Community College should be accessed immediately - with necessary compensation for staff time and resources.

Quality Improvement Resource

Libraries should be designated at a minimum of three colleges to serve as the basis for district-wide information centers.

A Quality Improvement Resource Center should be established and all colleges and the District Office should be linked through a Network. Such a Resource Center should be open and available to the public upon payment of a membership fee and should promote quality improvement to the entire community through conferences, speakers, videos, resource materials, and software.

The Quantum Quality Initiative should be the basis for strategic planning and budgeting and should be utilized to comply with North Central Association accreditation processes.

Areas of opportunity (also sometimes called "Fat Rabbits") should be identified quickly and pilot teams for major process improvement should be established. The priority for major process improvement should involve processes between the District Office and the colleges. The Commission desires to eliminate all policies, processes, procedures, and incentives which promote competition among the colleges and do not serve our customers well, especially our students.

The Quantum Quality Initiative should have as its goal the development of a number of quality improvement resource experts throughout the District who will be able to provide help in general and in specialized areas of quality improvement. The potential of our employees is enormous. We have not even begun to tap some of that potential. We must build the capacity in-house to implement the Quantum Quality Initiative quickly and successfully.

The Commission is very concerned that the "people" side of quality improvement is emphasized. That is one reason why training and

education is so vital. Individuals must be trained to work as members of a team for full implementation of quality improvement. That will represent a significant shift in the way we do business for a number of people. Therefore, team skills must be developed. Specifically the kind of training which is important for development of team skills includes interpersonal communication (e.g., delivering and receiving feedback), conflict resolution, coaching people for work performance improvement, fostering trust in work relationships, and use of quality improvement tools.

We also recognize the need to improve our recognition system for employees. **We should spend more time asking employees about the kinds of rewards and recognition important and meaningful to them - and making any necessary changes in our current system based on that feedback.**

The Commission recognizes that while the Maricopa District is a wonderful place to work, there is fear in the workplace which is inhibiting productivity. **We must take care to reduce fear in the workplace to ensure increased productivity and pride and joy in the work we do.**

The resources - including people, funding, and time - must be allocated or re-allocated as necessary. The Steering Team must identify the resources required to implement the actions they determine are appropriate within the timetables they establish. Basically that means training resources must be found immediately so training can begin. There is no question that if the Quantum Quality Initiative is truly a priority, then existing or new resources must be devoted to the effort.

5. The Quantum Quality Initiative should be integrated into Maricopa classrooms.

The Commission strongly believes that the

essence of "Quantum" in the Quantum Quality Initiative is integrating quality improvement into the classroom. We must support faculty in researching and exploring quality improvement in the classroom and incorporating the quality improvement philosophy and tools and techniques across the curriculum at Maricopa. We must encourage the development of certificate and degree programs so students will be able to obtain the education and training necessary to work and live in the newly transformed world of quality.

6. The Maricopa District should establish external partnerships to ensure broad-based community support and involvement.

The Maricopa District, in its leadership role throughout the educational community and the community at large, should seek to foster partnerships with business, industry, government and educational institutions to ensure that we are all striving to achieve quality improvement.

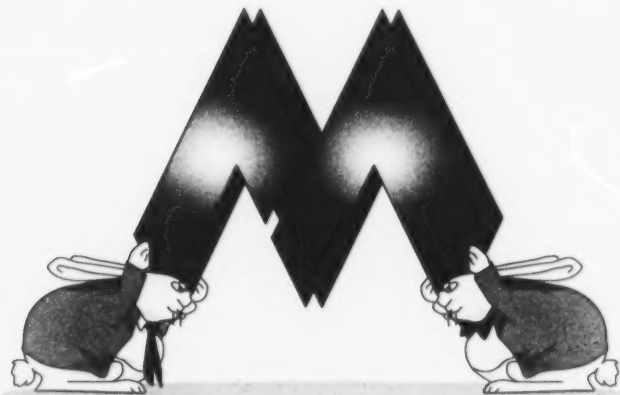
7. Monitoring, analysis and evaluation of all efforts in the Quantum Quality Initiative should be developed and implemented to ensure success.

The Commission recognizes the importance of establishing a method for qualitative and quantitative measurement and analysis of the results of the Initiative. The Steering Team should be charged with designing a measurement system, identifying benchmarks, and reporting progress regularly on both. The Steering Team should also develop a qualitative measure and establish mechanisms for obtaining customer feedback. These data-gathering systems should be evaluated regularly to determine if they are doing the job they were designed to do.

CONCLUSION

We are pleased with the results of our teamwork. We used quality improvement processes and tools to arrive at our findings and recommendations and we highly recommend the processes and tools. We believe quality improvement will work at Maricopa, and we are ready to assist the Chancellor, the Steering Team and anyone interested in pursuing the Quantum Quality Initiative. We hope to be useful in the future. We invite the Chancellor to call us together again within six to 12 months to review with him and the Steering Team the progress to date in implementing the Maricopa Quantum Quality Initiative.

Thank you for allowing us to serve the Maricopa District as members of the Commission on Quantum Quality.



APPENDIX

COMMISSION ON QUANTUM QUALITY EDUCATIONAL STEPS

In reviewing the history of total quality management, the Commission learned that there is a long, successful track record of implementation of TQM in business and industry. In the 1930's such gurus as Shewhart, Ott, and Juran were espousing a focus on internal and external customer needs and the Plan-Do-Study-Act method of improvement and statistical analysis. In the 1940's the emphasis of such well-known people as Deming and Feigenbaum was on management commitment, involving everyone and systems improvement as well as Plan-Do-Study-Act. The 1950's saw the transfer of know-how to Japan. The NBC TV program, "If Japan Can - Why Can't We?" which aired in 1980 served as the catalyst for discussion and implementation of TQM in the U.S. The Malcolm Baldrige Award was established in 1987 to recognize quality improvement in business in the U.S. Implementation of total quality management in the first community colleges occurred in 1985 at Fox Valley Technical College in Appleton, WI and Delaware County Community College in Media, PA.

The Commission utilized the talents of Mr. George Bateman of the Graduate School of Business at the University of Chicago to describe the efforts and experiments undertaken in the classrooms of the Business School. Mr. William Miller of Global Creativity, Inc. presented material on innovation styles which prepared us for more collaborative teamwork, improved idea generation sessions, and assessing quality improvement strategies. Videos included: The Business of Paradigms (Joel Barker); The Customer is Always Dwight; Discovering the Future (Joel Barker); and Leadership Alliance (Tom Peters).

A panel discussion conducted by a chancellor and presidents of community colleges at various stages of implementing quality improvement programs was held in April.

Participating in that discussion (which was videotaped) were: Dr. Stan Spanbauer, President, Fox Valley Technical College, Appleton, WI; Dr.

Bill Wenrich, Chancellor, Dallas Community College District; Dr. Clyde LeTarte, President, Jackson Community College, Jackson, MI; Dr. B.A. Acevedo, President, College Without Walls, Houston; Carole Schwinn of Jackson Community College (a consultant on TQM) served as moderator of the panel. The Commission learned a great deal about TQM in the real world of community colleges.

- We were impressed by the presidents' and chancellor's truthful comments (both positive and negative) concerning implementation of TQM. They were eager to share information and advice with us.

- They agreed that TQM must be leader-led, takes time, is do-able, is not a fad, and there is no one right way - no prescription for success exists. They were pleased with the changes in their colleges which resulted in greater customer satisfaction, with their people who felt empowered to do their jobs, and in themselves as they had changed from a more autocratic leadership style to a collaborative, facilitative, participative style.

- They strongly advocated TQM for us --- for everybody.

We also listened to one of our own - Rio Salado Community College. Rio is a leader in implementing TQM and we were impressed with Rio's basic tenets, including:

- People improve processes using a systematic approach.

- Continuous improvement is a way of life.

- Openness and trust are key elements in our work environment.

- We are focused on "the customer" - internal and external.

- Teamwork is key to success.

- Top-down & bottom-up commitment are visible.

We were impressed by the consistent and thorough way in which Rio adopted the basic tenets of TQM. The Rio staff presented practical applications of teamwork, focusing on the customer and improving work processes.

A visit was conducted to Fox Valley Technical College in Appleton, WI by Dr. Linda Thor, Dr. Paul Elsner and Donna Schober. We wanted to see what a college looked like after seven years of quality improvement. We had read President Spanbauer's second book on the subject of TQM, "A Quality System of Education" before the visit. **Our conclusion: A QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM WORKS IN A COMMUNITY COLLEGE SETTING.** It was exciting to see such a dynamic quality improvement program.

- We were impressed by their people who are totally dedicated to serving the customer - and totally willing to ask for and receive feedback from the customer.

- Training is mandatory -- even for student workers who learn the basics of customer satisfaction. Excellent training programs have been and are being developed illustrating the critical need for employee education and the benefits of career development for all employees.

- Self-directed work teams are functioning.

- An associate degree and a certificate program have been developed in the quality area.

- A Quality Academy which provides training in-house, to outside educational entities, and to business and industry is advancing their quality cause with great success.

- A Quality/Productivity Resource Center has linked the community with the college through quality.

Although the Commission spent a good deal of time reviewing general material, we decided to explore some topics in greater specificity. We began,

with the help of our consultants, to identify our customers, a common TQM term for the people we serve internally and externally, customer needs and to focus on the concept of customer satisfaction to aid us in understanding that important element of quality improvement.

Throughout our work, the Commission was especially concerned about change and its impact on people. So we explored fear in our workplace and discussed the issue of "undiscussables" - a very liberating experience in all our minds. Dan Oestreich, co-author of the book "Driving Fear Out of the Workplace," spent a morning with us to guide us through that discussion. We are not afraid to admit that we are a good organization suffering with some pain. However, we now believe we know how to bring a constructive, healing focus to that pain.

We were also concerned about rewards and recognition for people and we examined a number of programs implemented in conjunction with total quality management programs. One thing is certain: recognition is integral to quality improvement. We know it is best to seek input because it is tricky to devise a recognition system that meets the needs of a diverse group of people and encourages quality performance and teamwork.

Finally, we practiced using the team process tools and techniques of quality improvement. What eye-opening exercises those were!! And what fun!

